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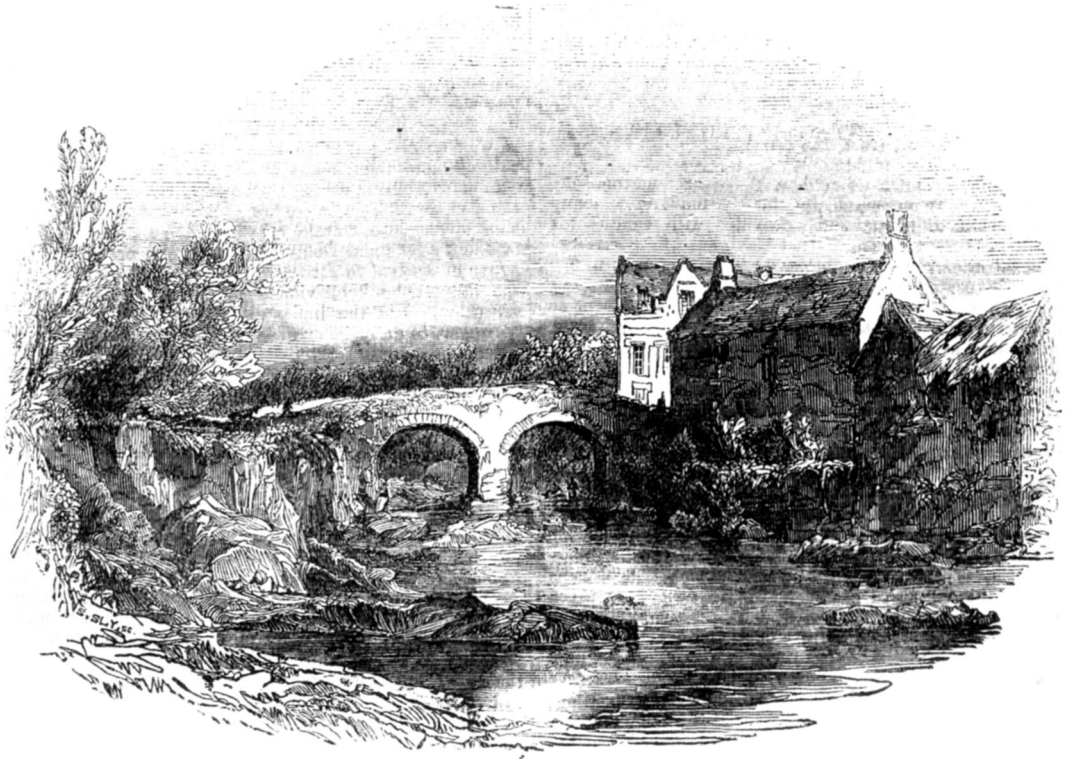
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THE OLD BRIDGE OF MILTOWN, COUNTY OF DUBLIN.

We have already taken occasion more than once to express our admiration of the beautiful and varied scenery which surrounds our city on all sides, and which presents such an endless variety in its general character and individual features as no other city that we are acquainted with in the empire possesses in any thing like an equal degree. Other cities may have scenery in their immediate vicinity of some one or two classes of higher beauty or grandeur than we can boast of; but it is the proud distinction of our metropolis that there is no class of scenery whatsoever of which its citizens have not the most characteristic examples within their reach of enjoyment by a walk or drive of an hour or two; and yet, strange to say, they are not enjoyed or even appreciated. Some suburb of fashionable resort is indeed visited by them, but not on account of any picturesque beauty it may possess, but simply because it is fashionable, and allows us to get into a crowd—as our delightful Musard concerts are attended by the multitude less for the music than to see and be seen, and where we too often show our want of good taste by being listless or silent when we ought to applaud, and express loudly our approbation at some capricious extravagance of the performer that we ought to condemn. The truth is, that in every thing appertaining to taste we are as yet like children, and have very much to learn before we can emancipate ourselves from the trammels of vulgar fashion, and become qualified to enjoy those pure and refined pleasures

consequent upon a just perception of the beautiful in art and nature. Till this power is acquired, our green pastoral vallies, our rocky cliffs, mountain glens, and shining rivers, as well as our exhibitions of the Fine Arts, and that pure portion of our literature which disdains to pander to the prejudices of sect or party, must remain less appreciated at home than abroad, and be less known to ourselves than to strangers who visit us, and who in this respect are often infinitely our superiors. It is no fault of ours, however, that we are thus defective in the cultivation of those higher qualities of mind which would so much conduce to our happiness; the causes which have produced such a result are sufficiently obvious to every reflecting mind, and do not require that we should name or more distinctly allude to them. But we have reason to be inspired with cheerful hope that they will not very long continue in operation. Temperance and education are making giant strides amongst us; and when we look at our various institutions for the promotion of science, art, and mechanics, all in active operation, and aided by the growth of a national literature, we can scarcely hesitate to feel assured that the arts of civilized life are taking a firm root in our country, and will be followed by their attendant blessings.

But it may be asked, What have these remarks to do with Miltown Bridge, the subject of our prefixed woodcut? Our answer is, that in presenting our readers with one of the

innumerable picturesque scenes which are found along the courses of our three rivers, the Liffey, the Dodder, and the Tolka, all of which abound in features of the most beautiful pastoral landscapes, we have naturally been led into such a train of thought by the fact that we hold their charms in little esteem, and that few amongst us have the taste to appreciate their beauties, and the consequent desire to enjoy them. The Liffey may perhaps be known to a certain extent to many of our Dublin readers, but we greatly doubt that the Tolka or the Dodder are equally familiar to them; and yet the great poet of nature, Mr Wordsworth, on his visit to our city, made himself most intimately acquainted with the scenery of the former, and thought it not inferior to that of his own Duddon, which his genius has immortalized.

In like manner, the scenery of the Dodder, though so little known to the mass of our fellow citizens, has been often explored by many British as well as native artists, who have filled their portfolios with its picturesque treasures, and have spoken of them with rapturous enthusiasm. Thus, for example, it was, as we well know, from this fount that much of the inspiration of our great self-taught imaginative painter Danby was drawn; and though we could not point to a higher name, we could, if it were necessary, give many other little less illustrious examples of talent cultivated in the same school of nature.

Amongst the many picturesque objects which this little mountain river presents, the Old Bridge of Miltown has always been with those children of genius an especial favourite, and many an elaborate study has been made of its stained and timeworn walls. It is indeed just such a scene as the lover of the picturesque would delight in;—quiet and sombre in its colour, harmonious in its accompanying features of old buildings, rocks, water, and mountain background; and, as a whole, impressed with a poetical sentiment approaching to melancholy, derived from its pervading expression of neglect and ruin. It is for these reasons that we have given old Miltown bridge a place in our topographical collections; and though many of our Dublin readers, for whom, on this occasion, we write especially, may not fully understand our language, or participate in our feelings, the fault is not ours: our object in writing is a kind one. We would desire that they should all acquire the power of enjoying the beautiful in nature, and, as a consequence, in art; knowing as we do that such power is productive of the sweetest as well as the purest of intellectual pleasures of which we are susceptible, and makes us not only happier, but better men.

We are aware also that some of our Dublin readers, whose tastes are not uncultivated, but who have taken less trouble than ourselves to make themselves familiar with our suburban localities, may think that we speak too enthusiastically of the scenery of the Dodder river and its accompanying features. But if such readers would meet us at Miltown some sunny morning in May or June next, and accompany us along the Dodder till we reach its source among the mountains—a moderate walk—we are satisfied that we should be able to remove their scepticism, and give them an enjoyment more delightful than they could anticipate, and for which they would thank us warmly. We could show them not only a varied succession of scenes of picturesque or romantic beauty on the way, but also many contiguous objects of historic interest, on which we would discourse them much legendary lore, and which we should lead them to examine, offering as an excuse for our temporary divergence the beautiful sonnet of Wordsworth to his favourite Duddon:—

Who swerves from innocence, who makes divorce
Of that serene companion—a good name,
Recovers not his loss, but walks with shame,
With doubt, with fear, and haply with remorse.
And oft-times he, who, yielding to the force
Of chance-temptation, ere his journey end,
From chosen comrade turns, or faithful friend,
In vain shall rue the broken intercourse.
Not so with such as loosely wear the chain,
That binds them, pleasant River! to thy side:—
Through the rough copse wheel thou with hasty stride,
I choose to saunter o'er the grassy plain,
Sure, when the separation has been tried,
That we, who part in love, shall meet again.

Thus, as we approached towards Rathfarnham, we should ask them to admire that noble classic gateway on the river's side, which leads into the deserted park of the Loftus family,

and which in its present state, clothed with ivy and hastening to decay, cheats the imagination with its appearance of age, and looks an arch of triumph of old Rome. We would then lead them into this noble abandoned park, still in its desolation rich in the magnificence of art and nature; then we would take a meditative look at its general features and at those of the grim yet grand and characteristic castellated mansion which with so much cost it was formed to adorn; and we should ask our companions, why has so much beauty and magnificence been thus abandoned? Here in its silent hall we could still show them original marble busts of Pope and Newton by Roubilliac; and, in the drawing-room, pictures painted expressly for it on the spot by the fair and accomplished hand of Angelica Kaufmann. But the interest of those objects would after all be somewhat a saddening one, and we should return to our cheerful river with renewed pleasure, to relieve our spirits with a view of objects more enlivening. Such an object would be that old mill near Rathfarnham, where paper was first manufactured in Ireland about two centuries since. It was on the paper so made that Usher's *Primordia* was printed; and the *Annals of the Four Masters* were written. The manufacturer was a Dutchman—but what matter? At the Bridge of Templeogue we should probably make another short divergence, to take a look at the old park and mansion of the Talbots and Domvilles; and here, beneath a majestic grove of ancient forest trees, we should show our companions the largest bank of violets that ever came under our observation. But the limits allotted to this article will not permit us to describe or even name a twentieth part of the objects or scenes of interest and beauty that would present themselves in quick succession; and we shall only say a few words on one more—the glorious Glanasmole, or the Valley of the Thrush, in which the Dodder has its source. Reader, have you ever seen this noble valley? Most probably you have not, for we know but few that ever even heard of it; and yet this glen, situated within some six or seven miles of Dublin, presents mountain scenery as romantic, wild, and almost as magnificent, as any to be found in Ireland. In this majestic solitude, with the lovely Dodder sparkling at our feet, and the gloomy Kippure mountain with his head shrouded in the clouds two thousand four hundred feet above us, we have a realization of the scenery of the Ossianic poetry. It is indeed the very locality in which the scenes of some of these legends are laid, as in the well-known Ossianic romance called the *Hunt of Glanasmole*; and monuments commemorative of the celebrated Fin and his heroes, “tall grey stones,” are still to be seen in the glen and on its surrounding mountains. We could conduct our readers to the well of Ossian, and the tomb of Fin's celebrated dog Bran, in which, perhaps, the naturalist might find and determine his species by his remains. The monument of Fin himself is on a mountain in the neighbourhood, and that of his wife Finane, according to the legends of the place, gives name to a mountain over the glen, called See-Finane. But there are objects of even greater interest to the antiquary and naturalist than those to be seen in Glanasmole, namely, the three things for which, according to some of these old bardic poems, the glen was anciently remarkable, and which were peculiar to it: these were the large breed of thrushes from which the valley derived its name, the great size of the ivy leaves found on its rocks, and the large berries of the rowan or mountain ash, which formerly adorned its sides. The ash woods indeed no longer exist, having been destroyed to make charcoal above eighty years since, but shoots bearing the large berries are still to be seen, while the thrush continues in his original haunt in the little dell at the source of the river on the side of Kippure, undisturbed and undiminished in size, and the giant ivy clings to the rocks as large as ever; we have seen leaves of it from seven to ten inches diameter. We should also state, that to the geologist Glanasmole is as interesting as to the painter, antiquary, or naturalist, as our friend Dr Schouler will show our readers in some future number of our Journal.

But we must bring our walk and our gossip to a conclusion, or our friends will tire of both, if they are not so already. Let us, then, rest at the little primitive Irish Christian church of Kilmosantan, now ignorantly called St Anne's, seated on the bank of the river amongst the mountains; and having refreshed ourselves with a drink from the pure fountain of the saint, we shall return in silence to the place from which we started, and bid our kind companions a warm farewell.